



State of Arizona  
**Department of Education**

**Tom Horne**  
Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

**CN# 24-05**

**MEMORANDUM**

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**To:** School Health & Nutrition Program Sponsors

**From:** Mary Szafranski, Deputy Associate Superintendent  
Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Unit

Holly Mueller, Program Director  
Arizona Department of Education, School Health & Nutrition Programs

**Date:** December 6, 2004

**RE:** **CRITICAL** Verification Guidance for SY 2004-2005 Reporting Requirements

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**This critical memo serves to notify all Local Education Agencies (LEA) that verification results must be reported to the Department of Education by March 1 2005.** Also included with this memo is the CNP Verification Guidance Manual developed by Arizona Department of Education. The manual provides LEAs with a brief introduction to Verification, a sample verification schedule, and step-by-step instructions on navigating and recording required data on the CNP Common Logon. For detailed information on Verification refer to the Free and Reduced-Price Guidance Manual.

**Changes that are now in affect:**

- All LEAs must report verification results to the Arizona Department of Education no later than March 1<sup>st</sup>
- All LEAs must collect and report the number of students who were terminated as a result of verification but who were reinstated as of February 15<sup>th</sup>
- All LEAs must maintain copies of the verification report and all supporting documentation for a minimum of three years

- All LEAs must have every verified application readily retrievable on an individual school basis and include all documents submitted by the household for the purpose for verifying eligibility
- All LEAs must retain all relevant correspondence between the household selected for verification and the LEA

As a result of the changes, LEAs will be required to increase their efforts in order to help strengthen program integrity. The new provisions include administrative relief for LEAs able to obtain verification information for a relatively high portion of students selected for eligibility verification. **The results of your verification process during SY 2004-2005 will determine whether you qualify for administrative relief for SY 2005-2006.**

Under the new provisions, beginning SY 2005-06 the sample size for verification continues to be the lesser of 3 percent or 3,000 applications. However, the sample must be selected from error-prone applications (those applications that indicate monthly income within \$100 or annual income within \$1,200 of the income eligibility limits for free or reduced-price school meals). In cases in which there are not enough error-prone applications to comply with the required sample size, LEA's must randomly select additional applications to fulfill the percentage or number requirement. The option to select a focused sample will not be available unless the LEA qualifies for administrative relief. For detailed information on how to achieve administrative relief refer to Reducing Paperwork and Connecting Low-Income Children With School Meals. [www.ade.az.gov/health-safety/cnp/nslp](http://www.ade.az.gov/health-safety/cnp/nslp)

Beginning with the fall 2005 verification process, a LEA will qualify for reduced verification requirements (that is, the district will be able to choose to verify a 3% random sample or a 1% focused sample) if:

- It achieved a response rate of 80 percent or higher (i.e. a non-response rate of less than 20 percent) in the preceding school year;
- It has more than 20,000 children approved by application for free or reduced price meals as of October 1, and shows that its verification non-response rate for the prior school year was at least 10 percent lower than the verification non-response rate for the year before that; or
- For 2005-2006 only, it has more than 20,000 children approved by application for free or reduced price meals as of October 1 and attempts to conduct direct verification using data from at least two other permissible income-tested programs during the fall of 2005.

Direct Verification: Starting July 2005, state child nutrition agencies and LEAs will have the option of conducting direct verification – that is, using data maintained by other programs or agencies, including Medicaid, or the State employment agency to verify eligibility for free or reduced-price meals for applications selected for verification without having to contact the household.

The 2004/2005 Verification Report will be completed on ADE's Common Logon. For complete instructions please refer to the CNP Verification Guidance Manual. ADE will notify LEAs of the results of the LEA's verification efforts for future verification requirements.

When referring to the CNP Verification Guidance Manual you will notice Part I of the Verification Summary Report has several questions regarding Provision 2/3 schools (Special Assistance). If you are not receiving Special Assistance disregard those questions referring to Provision 2/3 schools.

Frequently Asked Question: If a household does not respond, do I report them in the "Did not respond" category or the "Paid" category or both?

Answer: If a household does not respond the LEA shall report them *only* in the "Did not respond" category.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact your assigned specialist.

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